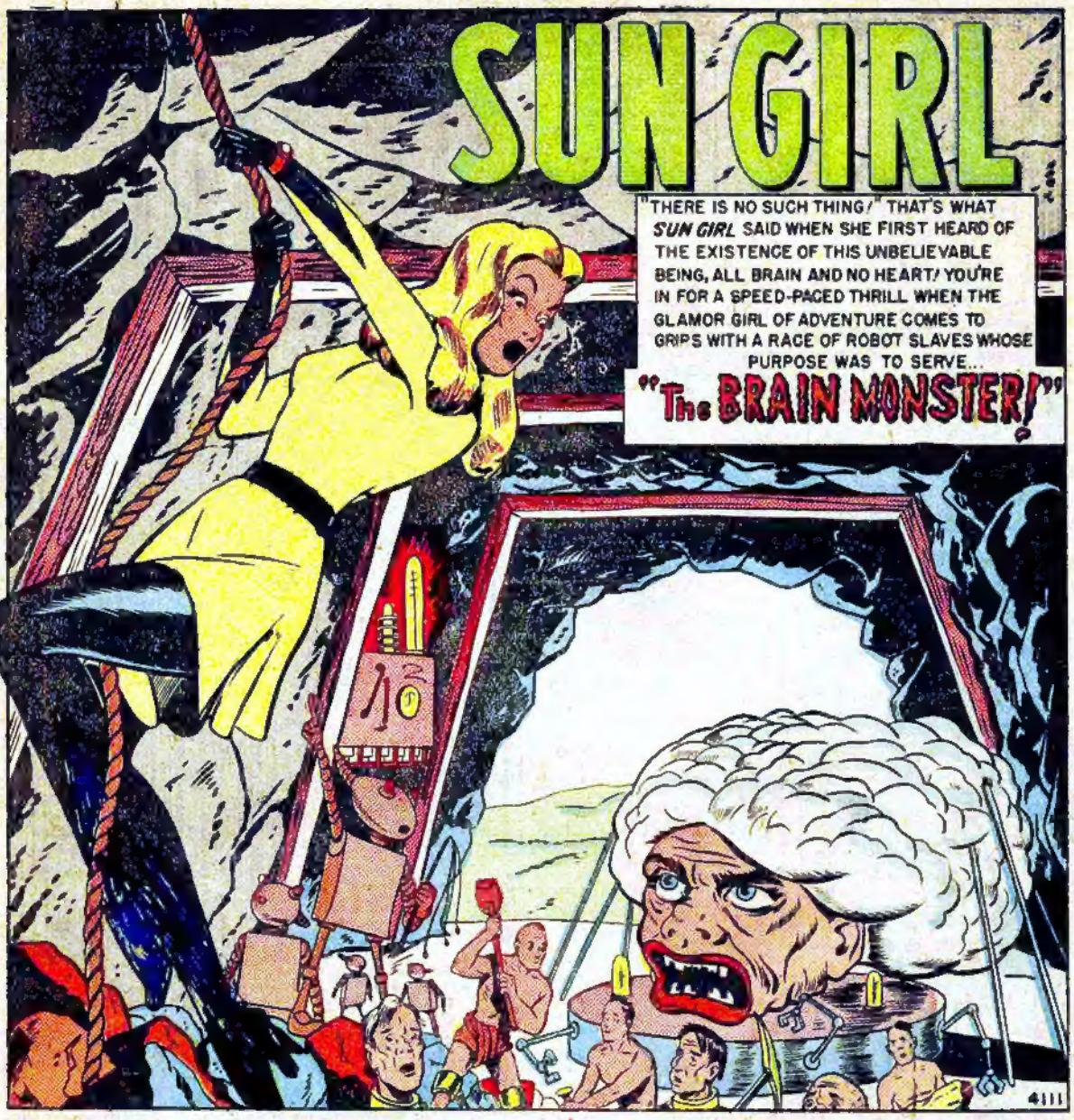
THE HUMAN TORCH
COMICS
JAN. NO. 34
10¢
IT'S THAT MACHINE UP THERE! YOU'VE GOT TO STOP THAT MACHINE OR THE WORLD IS FINISHED!
TORCH! GOOD HEAVENS! WHAT'S HAPPENING TO YOU? YOU'RE--CHANGING!! AND THE COUNTRYSIDE TOO--EVERYTHING'S GETTING FLAT!
THE MOST AMAZING STORY IN COMICS: "THE FLAT OF THE LAND!"


SUN GIRL
"THERE IS NO SUCH THING!" THAT'S WHAT SUN GIRL SAID WHEN SHE FIRST HEARD OF THE EXISTENCE OF THIS UNBELIEVABLE BEING, ALL BRAIN AND NO HEART! YOU'RE IN FOR A SPEED-PACED THRILL WHEN THE GLAMOR GIRL OF ADVENTURE COMES TO GRIPS WITH A RACE OF ROBOT SLAVES WHOSE PURPOSE WAS TO SERVE...
"The BRAIN MONSTER!"
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SUN GIRL HAS BEEN INVITED BY THE HOPI INDIANS TO THEIR RESERVATION IN NEW MEXICO, TO BE HONORED AT THEIR FESTIVAL OF THE SUN! SHE IS ARRIVING NOW...
WELCOME, SUN GIRL, TO THE HOPI RESERVATION! TOMORROW WE SHALL HONOR YOU WITH ALL THE TRADITION OF THE HOPI INDIANS!
THANK YOU, THANK YOU! I'M DELIGHTED TO BE HERE!

THAT EVENING, IN HER HOTEL ROOM, SUN GIRL LISTENS WITH INTEREST TO THE RADIO ACCOUNTS OF HER ARRIVAL AND THE PROGRAM AT THE INDIAN RESERVATION TOMORROW!

THE ANNUAL FESTIVAL OF THE SUN AT NARWELL RESERVATION TOMORROW AFTERNOON WILL BE DISTINGUISHED BY THE APPEARANCE OF THE FAMOUS SUN GIRL...

THEN, SUDDENLY, THE BROADCAST IS INTERRUPTED BY A STARTLING NEWS FLASH...

...SHOP OF THE SUN VALLEY JEWELRY COMPANY, ON MAIN STREET AT FORSYTHE, WAS *ROBBED* THIS EVENING! WITNESSES CLAIM THE MARAUDERS WERE STRANGE, *UNEARTHLY* BEINGS...!

AND AT THE SAME MOMENT, AT A NEARBY POLICE STATION...

I WAS CROSSING THE ALLEY PAST THE SHOP AND I SAW THEM COMING OUT! LITTLE BROWN THINGS, LIKE *METAL BOXES*, WITH ARMS AND LEGS! *THEY WEREN'T HUMAN!*

SOME PEOPLE SURE HAVE *WEIRD* IMAGINATIONS!

...AND AT THE JEWELRY STORE, WHERE POLICE ARE STILL INVESTIGATING...

THERE IS NOTHING MISSING BUT ARTICLES OF GOLD! NO JEWELS ARE GONE! JUST GOLD RINGS, WATCHES, AND CHAINS! THEY WANTED ONLY *GOLD!*

ONLY *GOLD!* NO DIAMONDS... NO RUBIES?

SURE WERE QUEER BURGLARS!

...AND AT MIDNIGHT THAT SAME NIGHT, A MAN AND WOMAN ARE ON THEIR WAY HOME FROM THE MOVIES, WHEN SUDDENLY...

YOU STAND VERY STILL! NO MOVE! GIVE US GOLD! YOUR WATCH... WOMAN'S RING!

WHAT...WHAT KIND OF THINGS ARE *THESE?*

ALL THEY WANT IS *GOLD?*

THE CREATURES THEN FLEE INTO THE NIGHT...STRANGE, WEIRD CREATURES, RESEMBLING NOTHING EVER SEEN BEFORE BY MAN OR BEAST!

LOOK! THEY'RE RUNNING AWAY WITH MY GOLD WATCH!

OH, (SOB!) MY *RING!*

LATE NEXT AFTERNOON, SUN GIRL APPEARS AT THE THE HOPI FESTIVAL...

IT IS AN HONOR TO HAVE YOU HERE, O, GIRL OF THE SUN! WE SHALL TRY TO MAKE YOUR STAY A PLEASANT ONE!

THANK YOU FOR ASKING ME HERE! IT'S A PLEASURE TO BE WHERE THERE IS SO MUCH PEACE AND QUIET!

SUN GIRL IS THE HIGH SPOT OF THE FESTIVAL...

HAIL THE GOLDEN GODDESS!

LEAVING THE FESTIVAL, SUN GIRL RUNS FOR HER CAR TO AVOID THE CROWD OF ADMIRING PEOPLE!

WAIT! WAIT, SUN GIRL!

SHE RUNS WITH THE SPEED OF LIGHT!

SORRY, FOLKS! SEE YOU SOON!

BUT BEFORE SHE CAN GET INTO HER CAR, THE WEIRD CUBE-MEN LEAP AT HER!

THE MASTER WILL BE PLEASED! THIS IS *GOLDEN GODDESS!*

THE CUBE-MEN... STEALING ONLY GOLD! WHY...WHY?

SHE IS *ALL* GOLD!

IN THAT MOMENT OF HER STARTLED CONFUSION, BEFORE SHE CAN DEFEND HERSELF...

OHHH!

THERE! THE ELECTRO-RAY TOOK CARE OF HER!

AS SHE DROPS UNCONSCIOUS, THE WEIRD, POWERFUL LITTLE CREATURES CARRY HER AWAY!

THIS IS THE BEST PRISE OF ALL...A *GODDESS* OF *GOLD!*

NOW THE MASTER WILL BE PLEASED AT *LAST!*

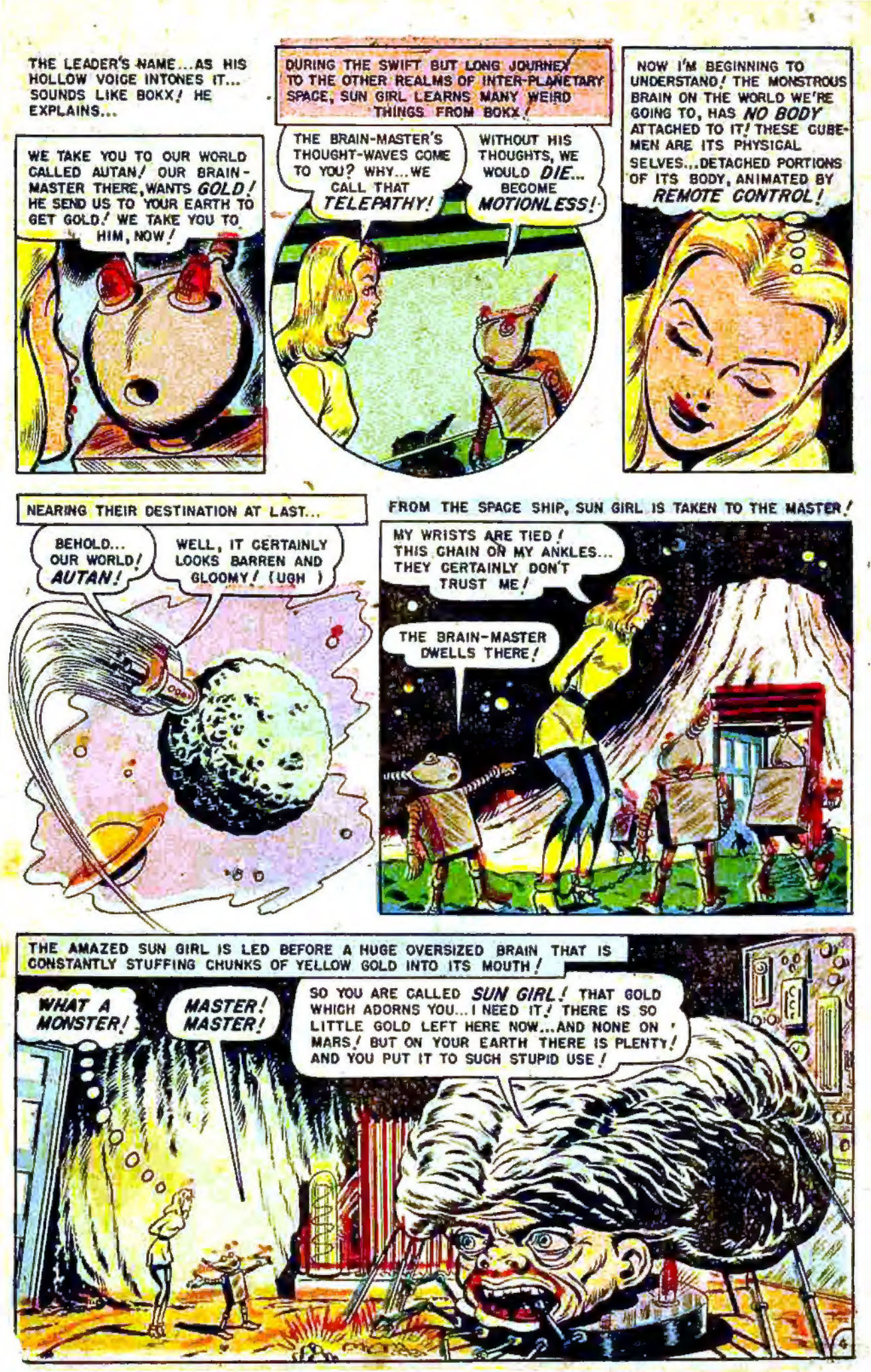
AND PRESENTLY, A STRANGE SHAPE RISES FROM THE DARKNING CACTUS-STREWN HILLS, AND SPEEDS AWAY INTO THE NIGHT SKY!

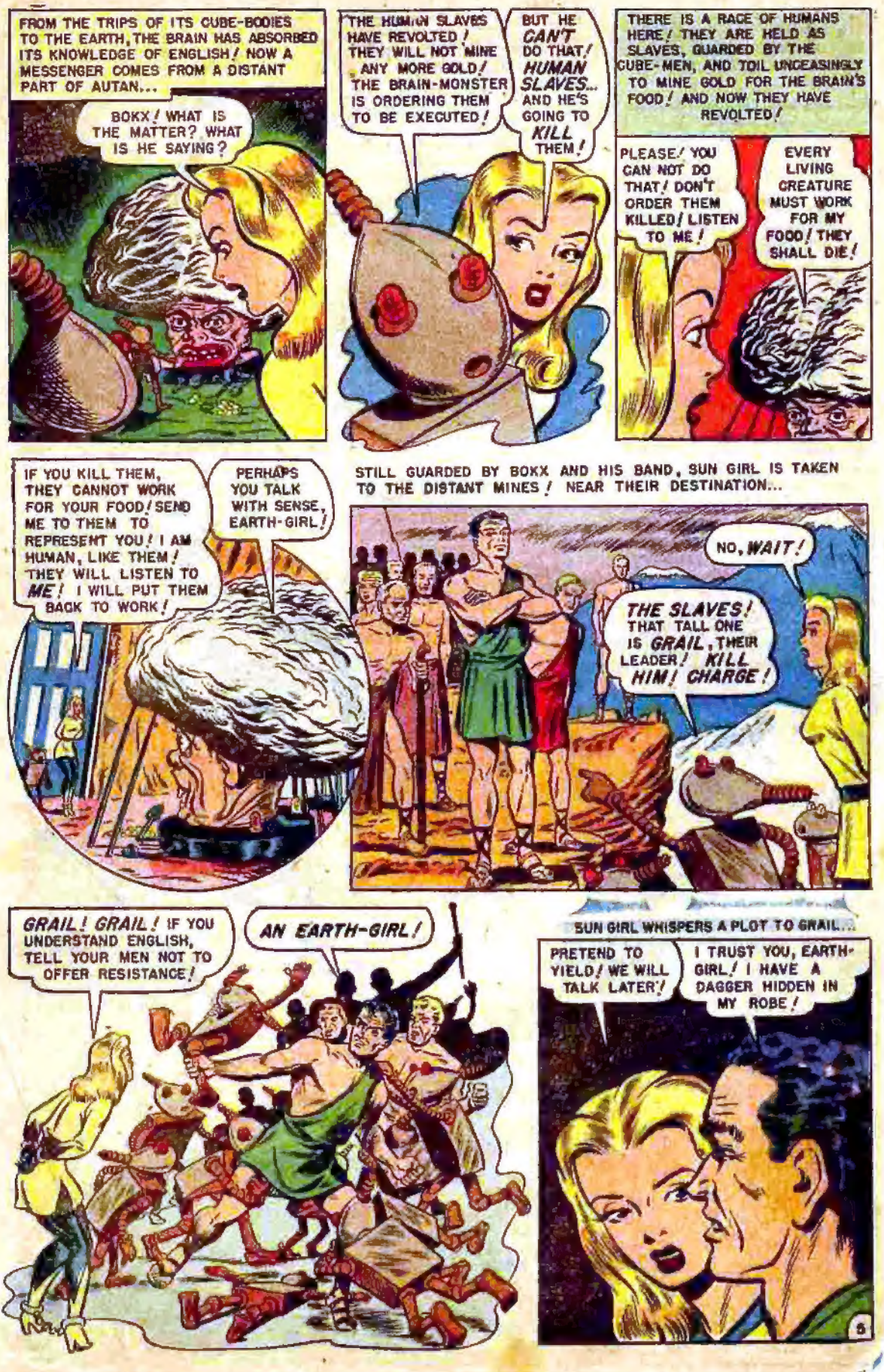
ROAR!

FINALLY, SUN GIRL RECOVERS CONSCIOUSNESS, AND..

W-WHAT HAPPENED? OH! NOW I REMEMBER... THE MYSTERIOUS *CUBE-MEN!*

YOU BETTER NOW? *GOOD!*


THE LEADER'S NAME...AS HIS HOLLOW VOICE INTONES IT... SOUNDS LIKE BOKX! HE EXPLAINS...
WE TAKE YOU TO OUR WORLD CALLED AUTAN! OUR BRAIN-MASTER THERE, WANTS GOLD! HE SEND US TO YOUR EARTH TO GET GOLD! WE TAKE YOU TO HIM, NOW!
DURING THE SWIFT BUT LONG JOURNEY TO THE OTHER REALMS OF INTER-PLANETARY SPACE, SUN GIRL LEARNS MANY WEIRD THINGS FROM BOKX!
THE BRAIN-MASTER'S THOUGHT-WAVES COME TO YOU? WHY...WE CALL THAT TELEPATHY!
WITHOUT HIS THOUGHTS, WE WOULD DIE... BECOME MOTIONLESS!
NOW I'M BEGINNING TO UNDERSTAND! THE MONSTROUS BRAIN ON THE WORLD WE'RE GOING TO, HAS NO BODY ATTACHED TO IT! THESE CUBE-MEN ARE ITS PHYSICAL SELVES...DETACHED PORTIONS OF ITS BODY, ANIMATED BY REMOTE CONTROL!
NEARING THEIR DESTINATION AT LAST...
BEHOLD... OUR WORLD! AUTAN!
WELL, IT CERTAINLY LOOKS BARREN AND GLOOMY! (UGH)
FROM THE SPACE SHIP, SUN GIRL IS TAKEN TO THE MASTER!
MY WRISTS ARE TIED! THIS CHAIN ON MY ANKLES... THEY CERTAINLY DON'T TRUST ME!
THE BRAIN-MASTER DWELLS THERE!
THE AMAZED SUN GIRL IS LED BEFORE A HUGE OVERSIZED BRAIN THAT IS CONSTANTLY STUFFING CHUNKS OF YELLOW GOLD INTO ITS MOUTH!
WHAT A MONSTER!
MASTER! MASTER!
SO YOU ARE CALLED SUN GIRL! THAT GOLD WHICH ADORNS YOU...I NEED IT! THERE IS SO LITTLE GOLD LEFT HERE NOW...AND NONE ON MARS! BUT ON YOUR EARTH THERE IS PLENTY! AND YOU PUT IT TO SUCH STUPID USE!


FROM THE TRIPS OF ITS CUBE-BODIES TO THE EARTH, THE BRAIN HAS ABSORBED ITS KNOWLEDGE OF ENGLISH! NOW A MESSENGER COMES FROM A DISTANT PART OF AUTAN...
BOKX! WHAT IS THE MATTER? WHAT IS HE SAYING?
THE HUMAN SLAVES HAVE REVOLTED! THEY WILL NOT MINE ANY MORE GOLD! THE BRAIN-MONSTER IS ORDERING THEM TO BE EXECUTED!
BUT HE CAN'T DO THAT! HUMAN SLAVES... AND HE'S GOING TO KILL THEM!
THERE IS A RACE OF HUMANS HERE! THEY ARE HELD AS SLAVES, GUARDED BY THE CUBE-MEN, AND TOIL UNCEASINGLY TO MINE GOLD FOR THE BRAIN'S FOOD! AND NOW THEY HAVE REVOLTED!
PLEASE! YOU CAN NOT DO THAT! DON'T ORDER THEM KILLED! LISTEN TO ME!
EVERY LIVING CREATURE MUST WORK FOR MY FOOD! THEY SHALL DIE!
IF YOU KILL THEM, THEY CANNOT WORK FOR YOUR FOOD! SEND ME TO THEM TO REPRESENT YOU! I AM HUMAN, LIKE THEM! THEY WILL LISTEN TO ME! I WILL PUT THEM BACK TO WORK!
PERHAPS YOU TALK WITH SENSE, EARTH-GIRL!
STILL GUARDED BY BOKX AND HIS BAND, SUN GIRL IS TAKEN TO THE DISTANT MINES! NEAR THEIR DESTINATION...
NO, WAIT!
THE SLAVES! THAT TALL ONE IS GRAIL, THEIR LEADER! KILL HIM! CHARGE!
GRAIL! GRAIL! IF YOU UNDERSTAND ENGLISH, TELL YOUR MEN NOT TO OFFER RESISTANCE!
AN EARTH-GIRL!
SUN GIRL WHISPERS A PLOT TO GRAIL...
PRETEND TO YIELD! WE WILL TALK LATER!
I TRUST YOU, EARTH-GIRL! I HAVE A DAGGER HIDDEN IN MY ROBE!
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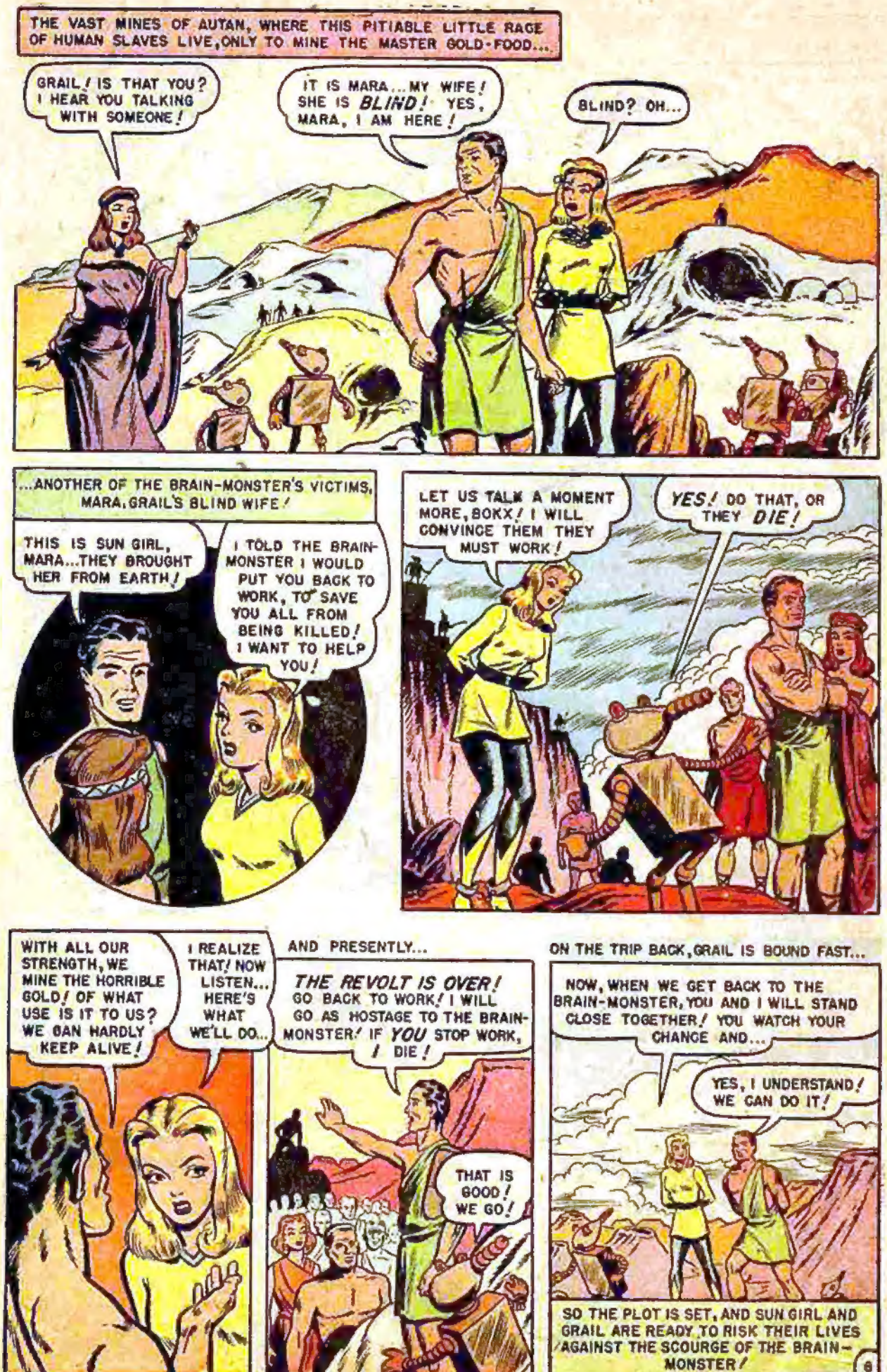
THE VAST MINES OF AUTAN, WHERE THIS PITIABLE LITTLE RACE OF HUMAN SLAVES LIVE, ONLY TO MINE THE MASTER GOLD-FOOD...
GRAIL! IS THAT YOU? I HEAR YOU TALKING WITH SOMEONE!
IT IS MARA...MY WIFE! SHE IS BLIND! YES, MARA, I AM HERE!
BLIND? OH...
...ANOTHER OF THE BRAIN-MONSTER'S VICTIMS, MARA, GRAIL'S BLIND WIFE!
THIS IS SUN GIRL, MARA...THEY BROUGHT HER FROM EARTH!
I TOLD THE BRAIN-MONSTER I WOULD PUT YOU BACK TO WORK, TO SAVE YOU ALL FROM BEING KILLED! I WANT TO HELP YOU!
LET US TALK A MOMENT MORE, BORX! I WILL CONVINCE THEM THEY MUST WORK!
YES! DO THAT, OR THEY DIE!
WITH ALL OUR STRENGTH, WE MINE THE HORRIBLE GOLD! OF WHAT USE IS IT TO US? WE CAN HARDLY KEEP ALIVE!
I REALIZE THAT! NOW LISTEN... HERE'S WHAT WE'LL DO...
AND PRESENTLY...
THE REVOLT IS OVER! GO BACK TO WORK! I WILL GO AS HOSTAGE TO THE BRAIN-MONSTER! IF YOU STOP WORK, I DIE!
THAT IS GOOD! WE GO!
ON THE TRIP BACK, GRAIL IS BOUND FAST...
NOW, WHEN WE GET BACK TO THE BRAIN-MONSTER, YOU AND I WILL STAND CLOSE TOGETHER! YOU WATCH YOUR CHANCE AND...
YES, I UNDERSTAND! WE CAN DO IT!
SO THE PLOT IS SET, AND SUN GIRL AND GRAIL ARE READY TO RISK THEIR LIVES AGAINST THE SCOURGE OF THE BRAIN-MONSTER!
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AGAIN, SUN GIRL FACES THE MONSTROUS BRAIN...

YOUR SLAVES ARE AT WORK! GRAIL IS HERE AS HOSTAGE!

THAT IS GOOD! GOLD! MORE GOLD FOR ME, ALWAYS!

NOW, GRAIL MOVES UNOBSTRUCTIVELY BEHIND SUN GIRL! HE SEEMS TO TO STUMBLE, BUMPING AGAINST HER, AND THEN...

...AS THEIR BOUND HANDS TOUCH, SUN GIRL'S WRIST RAY SPARKLES INTO ACTION... ITS BEAM EATING INTO GRAIL'S BONDS..

ZZZZZZ

IN ANOTHER SECOND...

FREE!

GOOD! NOW FOR ACTION!

HE CUTS SUN GIRL'S WRISTS FREE, AND THEN...

LET'S SEE WHAT MY RAY WILL DO TO THIS MONSTER!

NO! NO! STOP HER! STOP HER!

THE RAY SHOOTS WITH DEADLY ACCURACY INTO THE WRITHING MASS CALLED "THE BRAIN"!

ZAT!

JUST A MINUTE MORE! IT MUST BE DONE!

ZAT!

SPUT!

SPLUT!

SPUT! POP!

W-WHAT'S HAPPENING TO US? WE'RE G-GETTING WEAKER... WEA...

THEN, SUDDENLY, AS THE DIABOLICAL MASS OF THOUGHT-TISSUE LOSES CONSCIOUSNESS..

WITH THE HORRIBLE, DOMINATING THOUGHT-POWER GONE INTO OBLIVION, SUN GIRL AND GRAIL HASTEN BACK TO THE PEOPLE AT THE MINES...

LOOK! THE CUBE-MEN... ALL MOVEMENT IS GONE FROM THEM!

THEY WILL NEVER MOVE AGAIN! NONE OF THEM IN ALL OUR WORLD! NOW THEY WILL RUST AWAY! JUST LITTLE SCRAPS OF METAL! SUN GIRL, WE ARE FREE! FREE AT LAST!

LOOK AT THEM! JUST LITTLE BROKEN PIECES OF METAL NOW!

WE DID IT, MARA!

GRAIL, SUN GIRL... WE CAN NEVER THANK YOU ENOUGH FOR OUR FREEDOM!

WE'RE FREE.. FREE AT LAST!

WE'RE NO LONGER SLAVES! THE BRAIN-MONSTER IS NO MORE!

NOW WE CAN BEGIN TO REBUILD OUR OWN WORLD... IN SAFETY!

YOU MUST TAKE ME BACK TO MY EARTH NOW! THEN RETURN AND HELP YOUR PEOPLE BUILD A CIVILIZATION WITHOUT THE EVIL THOUGHTS THAT HAVE KEPT YOU IN SLAVERY!

LATER, WHEN THE LITTLE SPACE SHIP HAS BROUGHT THEM BACK TO EARTH...

GOOD-BYE, GRAIL! GOOD-BYE, MARA! I DO WISH YOU AND YOUR PEOPLE GREAT HAPPINESS!

THANK YOU, SUN GIRL! GOOD-BYE!

THEY'LL BE HAPPY NOW, EVEN IN THAT BLEAK, LITTLE WORLD! GOLD WAS THEIR CURSE! THAT'S A STRANGE THOUGHT... I'M NOT SURE THAT IT ISN'T OURS, ALSO!

THE END